

# Blue Valley School District, KS

## Kansas district extends growth measurement to early grades, experiences considerable impact

Blue Valley, the fourth largest school district in Kansas, covers 91 square miles. More than 20,000 K-12 students attend its 34 schools (five high schools, nine middle schools, and 20 elementary schools). Blue Valley began using MAP® Growth™ in 2005 to track students' academic growth over time and independently of grade level. In 2010 the district also decided to implement MAP Growth K-2 in all 20 elementary schools, starting in kindergarten.

Blue Valley educators have found that MAP Growth K-2 helps them set students on the right track early on, ensuring they enter the older grades with unparalleled growth and ready to take on the challenges of their state standards.

### CHALLENGE

Prior to using MAP Growth K-2, the district was using DIBELS with its youngest students. Educators were finding gaps in terms of data needs and looking to add a math component to their assessment toolkit. Since the district was pleased with MAP Growth testing in grades 2-8, Blue Valley decided to add MAP Growth K-2. This provided educators with the math tool they needed, along with additional reporting and growth measurement functionalities. Former Director of Assessment and Research at Blue Valley School District, Elizabeth Parks, recalls that when MAP Growth K-2 was first implemented, some educators didn't feel comfortable using computer-based assessments with the youngest kindergarten students at the start of the year. Parks notes this soon

changed, however. "Seeing the positive response from our students in the winter, we decided to add fall kindergarten testing for all students the following year. It's been working well ever since," she says.

In addition to tracking growth with MAP Growth and MAP Growth K-2, Blue Valley educators also use the shorter MAP Growth K-2 Skills Checklists (skill-specific mastery tests included within the assessment suite) in between the growth assessments to keep tabs on foundational skill development.

"What's been particularly helpful at both the primary level and in the older grades is applying the instructional data," explains Parks. "It's great that the skills are listed in the order in which you need to teach them. We can immediately see how to scale something back for a student who is scoring on the lower end as well as anticipate where the higher performers are going. Seeing the skills vertically helps a lot."

Blue Valley educators also make the most of the grouping features in the reports to aid in differentiation. Parks shares, "Especially for our youngest students, MAP Growth data helps us more than any other tool with guiding grouping decisions. We don't do tracking, so we have a wide variety of abilities in each class, yet our focus is on what each individual child needs. With MAP Growth, we have a great deal of confidence in our decision-making."

**“What I value most is the research incorporated into the whole MAP Growth system. We have a wide variety of abilities in each class, yet our focus is on what each individual child needs. With MAP Growth and MAP Growth K–2, we have a great deal of confidence in our decision-making.”**

**Elizabeth Parks**  
**Former Director of Assessment and Research**  
Blue Valley School District, KS

#### IMPACT

“In kindergarten, we have been using MAP Growth K–2 for just two years, but the results are very consistent among schools—almost every school has shown an improvement,” says Parks. Over the past year, the percentage of kindergarten students meeting mathematics and reading growth targets grew in a majority of the schools using MAP Growth K–2. Several schools made significant strides, experiencing as much as a 23% jump in the number of students meeting mathematics targets and a 20% jump in the number of students meeting reading targets.



#### District snapshot

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##### OVERLAND PARK, KS



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##### K-12 STUDENTS

**20,000**

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##### LEARNING NEEDS

**3%**

OF STUDENTS ARE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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##### ECONOMIC MARKERS

**8%**

OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR  
FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

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##### PRODUCT USE

IMPLEMENTED MAP GROWTH IN

**2005**

IMPLEMENTED MAP GROWTH K-2 IN

**2010**



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OCT18 | KAP2921